

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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-----102666 241638Z /64
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2139
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11620

E.O.11652:GDS
TAGS:PINT, PINS, PDIP, SOPN, UR,US
SUBJECT:MFA PROTESTS DISTRIBUTION OF USG STATEMENTS ON
ORLOV
REF: (A) LENINGRAD 01545, (B) 77 MOSCOW 16186

1. MFA USA DIVISION COUNSELOR VICTOR ISAKOV SUMMONED
POLCOUNSELOR TO THE MFA MAY 24. READING FROM A TEXT WHICH
HE SAID HE WOULD NOT TURN OVER, ISAKOV MADE AN ORAL
STATEMENT ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:
AS IS WELL KNOWN, THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN MOSCOW AND
CONSULATE GENERAL IN LENINGRAD HAVE RECENTLY DISTRIBUTED
PRESS MATERIALS CONTAINING STATEMENTS ON THE ORLOV CASE
AND ORLOV'S SLANDEROUS ANTI-SOVIET ACTIVITY AIMED AT
UNDERMINING AND WEAKENING THE SOVIET SYSTEM. THESE
MATERIALS ATTEMPT TO DEFEND ORLOV'S ACTIVITIES, WHICH
HAVE BEEN RIGHTLY JUDGED ILLEGAL BY A SOVIET COURT.
ALTHOUGH THE ATTENTION OF THE EMBASSY HAS ALREADY BEEN
DRAWN SEVERAL TIMES TO THE MATTER OF DISTRIBUTING SUCH
MATERIAL, THE EMBASSY HAS NOT DRAWN THE APPROPRIATE
CONCLUSION; DISTRIBUTION OF SUCH STATEMENTS CONSTITUTES
GROSS INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE SOVIET
UNION AND IS UNACCEPTABLE AND INTOLERABLE. WE TRUST THE
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EMBASSY AND CONSULATE GENERAL WILL TAKE STEPS TO CEASE
DISTRIBUTIONS OF SUCH MATERIAL AND AVOID REPETITION OF
SIMILAR INCIDENTS.

2. UPON CONCLUSION OF STATEMENT, POLCOUNSELOR ASKED
WHETHER HE WAS TO UNDERSTAND THAT ISAKOV WAS CHALLENGING
EMBASSY RIGHT TO DISTRIBUTE OFFICIAL US GOVERNMENT

STATEMENTS -- BY THE PRESIDENT, FOR EXAMPLE -- TO THOSE SOVIET INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAVE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN RECEIVING THEM. ISAKOV REPLIED THAT ON NOVEMBER 4, 1977, MFA MADE A SIMILAR STATEMENT TO POLCOUNSELOR REGARDING FASCELL COMMISSION REPORT (REF B). THE POINT, IN BRIEF, WAS NOT TO CHALLENGE THE EMBASSY'S RIGHT TO DISTRIBUTE PRESS RELEASES, BUT ABOUT ATTEMPTS TO DISTRIBUTE PUBLICATIONS HOSTILE TO THE SOVIET UNION. SUCH ATTEMPTS DO NOT SERVE THE CAUSE OF BETTERING RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, WHICH SHOULD BE THE MAIN TASK OF EMBASSY.

3. POLCOUNSELOR ANSWERED THAT CERTAINLY THE OVERALL PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN MOSCOW WAS TO BETTER RELATIONS, AND THAT HE HOPED THE SAME COULD BE SAID ABOUT THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. BUT SPEAKING INFORMALLY, POLCOUNSELOR CONTINUED, HE HAD SERVED IN SEVERAL POSTS, INCLUDING WASHINGTON, AND SEEN INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS NOT AT ALL, TO PUT IT MILDLY, FRIENDLY TO US. IN ANY EVENT, POLCOUNSELOR UNDERTOOK TO REPORT ISAKOV'S REMARKS. HE ALSO TOLD ISAKOV HE WAS AWARE OF A SIMILAR CONVERSATION IN LENINGRAD YESTERDAY (REF A).

4. ISAKOV REPLIED THAT WHILE POLCOUNSELOR PERSISTED IN TALKING IN GENERAL, HE WANTED TO TALK ABOUT SPECIFIC MATERIALS ISSUED BY THE EMBASSY, BOTH LAST NOVEMBER AND CONFIDENTIAL

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NOW. HE WAS NOW DIRECTING OUR ATTENTION TO "PRESS RELEASES" CONCERNING ORLOV AND HIS ANTI-SOVIET ACTIVITIES. POLCOUNSELOR CONCLUDED THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO ENGAGE IN A ARGUMENT ABOUT THE CONTENTS OF INFORMATION AND MATERIALS OVER WHICH THE TWO SIDES HAD SUCH OBVIOUSLY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES. ON THAT THE DISCUSSION ENDED.

5. COMMENT: WHILE ISAKOV CAREFULLY AVOIDED SPECIFYING PRECISELY WHICH STATEMENTS HE HAD IN MIND, HE CLEARLY WAS REFERRING TO EMBASSY AND AMCONGEN LENINGRAD DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICIAL TEXTS OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S MAY 19 STATEMENT ON SAME SUBJECT, AND THE MAY 18 STATE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON ORLOV SENTENCING, COPIES OF WHICH WERE IN THE FILE FROM WHICH HE WAS READING.

6. WE RECOMMEND ONE OF FOLLOWING COURSES:

A. IGNORE SOVIET PROTEST AND SIMPLY CONTINUE DISTRIBUTION OF TEXTS OF MAJOR RELEVANT USG FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS OR

B. REPLY TO MFA ORALLY THAT EMBASSY HAS ISSUED NO "PRESS

RELEASES" IN RECENT WEEKS, AND A REVIEW OF ALL MATERIALS
DISTRIBUTED HAS REVEALED THAT ALL HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY
APPROPRIATE FOR EMBASSY DISTRIBUTION AND IN ACCORD WITH
NORMAL DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE. MATLOCK

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